

Message Text

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62

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 CU-04 HEW-08 PA-04 PRS-01

USIA-15 SPC-03 AID-20 DRC-01 /106 W

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R 191655Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9480

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE QUITO 6574

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, E

SUBJECT: TEACHERS WARNING STRIKE MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL

1. TWO DAY WARNING STRIKE OF NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS ENDED DECEMBER 12 AFTER CLOSING MOST PUBLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. TEACHER' DEMANDS, IN ADDITION TO INCREASE IN MINIMUM SALARY FROM SUCRE 200 TO SUCRE 300, EARLIER RETIREMENT AND FAMILY SUBSIDY, INCLUDED PITCH FOR 50 PERCENT INCREASE ACROSS BOARD OF ALL WAGES IN COUNTRY AND ELIMINATION OF PRICE CONTROL AUTHORITY.

2. GOVERNMENT REACTED TO ILLEGAL WORK STOPPAGE BY ORDERING ARREST OF STRIKE LEADERS AND HAS DECLARED THAT STRIKING TEACHERS WILL BE DISMISSED. REPORTEDLY, 12 STRIKE LEADERS IN VARIOUS PROVINCES ARE IN POLICE CUSTODY AND WILL BE SUBJECTED TO TRIAL FOR FOMENTING ILLEGAL STRIKE.

3. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL MONTH LONG TEACHERS' STRIKE WHICH ENDED LAST SEPTEMBER AFTER PRESIDENT OVERRULED MINISTER OF EDUCATION'S SUSPENSION OF TWO PROFESSORS (SEE QUITO 4717). TEACHER DISSATISFACTION WITH MINISTER OF EDUCATION HAS CONTINUED AS HAS CONCERN OVER ECONOMIC SITUATION; WARNING STRIKE WAS APPROVED AT RECENT TEACHERS' CONGRESS IN AMBATO. DEMANDS FOR 50 PERCENT INCREASE

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OF ALL WAGES IN COUNTRY AND ABOLITION OF PRICE CONTROL AUTHORITY

REPRESENTED EFFORT TO FORM BASIS FOR BROADER TRADE UNION AND WORKER
SUPPORT FOR TEACHER CASE. THIS EFFORT THUS FAR UNSUCCESSFUL AND
FIRM GOVERNMENT ACTION HAS APPARENTLY SQUELCHED OVERT MANIFESTATIONS
ALTHOUGH SOME AMONG TEACHERS' LEADERSHIP CONTINUE EFFORTS TO PROVOKE
FURTHER TEACHER DEMONSTRATIONS. FACT THAT MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT
PLAYING LEADING ROLE IN AFFAIR INSTEAD OF MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(WHO CONSIDERED INEPT) AND PERSISTENT RUMORS THAT GENERAL WAGE
INCREASE WILL BE INCLUDED AMONG ECONOMIC MEASURES WHICH
GOVERNMENT HAS PROMISED TO IMPLEMENT SHORTLY AUGUR WELL FOR
RESOLUTION THIS PROBLEM.
BREWSTER

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